

# Forest Row Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114504
<b>Local Authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	338383
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 June 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Marshall

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	225
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ken Marke
<b>Acting Headteacher</b>	Emma Twaddell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23 May 2007
<b>School address</b>	School Lane Hartfield Road Forest Row RH18 5DZ
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Fifteen lessons and eight different teachers were observed. Discussions were held with the acting headteacher, the acting deputy headteacher, teaching and support staff, governors, pupils, parents and carers. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including the school improvement plan, the tracking of pupils' progress, provision for those pupils having special educational needs and/or learning difficulties, and minutes of governors' meetings. In addition, 91 questionnaires from parents and carers, 25 staff questionnaires and 126 pupil questionnaires were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the standards and level of achievement of the current pupils, especially in writing and mathematics, and the impact of pupil mobility on attainment
- the rigour of the school's assessment and tracking procedures and what they say about pupils' progress in all classes
- the impact of the school's provision on pupils' personal development and its safeguarding procedures
- how curriculum and additional activities meet individual needs and contribute to the development of workplace and other skills
- how successfully the leaders and managers at all levels are enabling continuity and improvement.

## Information about the school

Forest Row School is in a village on the edge of the Ashdown Forest. The large majority of pupils, over 80%, come from the locality and 20% of pupils from districts up to eight miles from the school. The proportion of pupils from an ethnic minority background is high for the area at 14%. An above average number of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. These mostly relate to language, literacy and communication, and emotional difficulties. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Reception class. A significant number of pupils who have educational or behavioural difficulties join the school other than at the usual times.

For many years the teaching staff and the governing body were very stable with low staff mobility. This has changed recently. Nine members of staff have joined within the last 4 years; three joined within the last 18 months. The acting headteacher has been at the school since 2005 as deputy and took up the new role at Easter 2010.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Forest Row is a good school. Although there has been a significant change in staffing following the retirement of the long-standing headteacher, there remains a stable atmosphere of high expectations. The effective acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher know the school's strengths well and what needs to improve. They have carefully identified the correct priorities and are systematically tackling them. The school's long-established positive reputation in the community is due to the hard work of all staff and governors who share the senior leaders' values and ambitions for the school. Consequently, the school is well placed to build on its strengths and has a good capacity to improve. As one parent, reflecting a majority view, observed, 'The school is very open and welcoming. The community feel of the school means the children feel secure, confident and cared for.'

When children start school, their skills and understanding are in line with those expected for their age. They immediately make good progress in the Reception class. However, as the school acknowledges, there are occasional missed opportunities in the outside area when children are not encouraged to move from one activity to another at the most appropriate and effective time. Throughout the school, pupils make good progress. The high number of pupils joining in Years 4, 5 and 6 has an adverse impact on the standards pupils reach in national tests by the time they leave the school. However, the consistently effective teaching, through the careful focus on the needs of these incoming pupils, enables them all to make good progress. In the rest of the school, progress, while good, varies due to some inconsistencies in teaching. Staff have created attractive classrooms with imaginative displays and therefore provide a positive learning environment. In many lessons, teachers provide appropriately challenging activities, move the lesson along at a good pace and have high expectations of all their pupils. As a result, progress made by pupils in these lessons is good. As yet this is not consistent throughout the school and work is not always sufficiently challenging, particularly for the more able pupils.

The staff have sought to provide an innovative and exciting approach to their whole-school curriculum, to inspire pupils to learn. This method, known as 'The Learning Journey', is based on a well defined and detailed analysis of what skills pupils need and how best this can be acquired. As the pupils testified, there are many, exciting activities that lead to them enjoying their learning.

Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils are enthusiastic and well motivated. There is purposeful collaboration in lessons. The provision for vulnerable pupils, or for those

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with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is good and leads to these pupils making good progress. Pupils benefit from tailored individual or small-group sessions that successfully help to plug the gaps in their reading and writing skills.

The school does much to promote its place in the local community and works effectively with many local nurseries and playgroups, and local businesses. Its audit of community cohesion, undertaken by governors and staff, is underpinned by a careful analysis of the school's context. While the links with the local community are excellent, and those with schools abroad are outstanding, pupils' awareness of, and preparation for, living and working in a culturally diverse United Kingdom are not developed sufficiently well.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Use the school's current monitoring systems to improve the percentage of good teaching by focusing on:
  - improving the pace of lessons in some classes
  - further strengthening day-to-day assessment and marking to give pupils clear guidance during lessons
  - extending opportunities for staff to observe the best practice in the school.
  
- Improve the use of the outdoor area in the Early Years Foundation Stage by linking tasks to those in the classroom and by implementing the well-made plans.
  
- Enhance pupils' understanding of their place in a culturally diverse United Kingdom and extend the school's provision for community cohesion by:
  - instigating the findings of the recent analysis
  - implementing their plans to link with schools in other localities.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Throughout the school, most pupils achieve well and enjoy their learning. All groups of pupils, including those whose circumstances have made them most vulnerable, make good progress by the time they leave. Standards at the end of Year 2 are generally above average and those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities do especially well. The recent, thorough attention paid to reading has ensured that pupils are now making good progress and achieving well in this discipline.

In the lessons observed that were good or better, pupils were very attentive in class, worked together well and enjoyed activities. In an exceptional information and communication technology (ICT) lesson in Year 4/5, pupils really considered their reactions carefully when considering the responses they had received from their link with a school in Queensland, Australia. The teacher carefully and tactfully chose

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different pupils to respond, and the others all appreciated why. Two separate French lessons for older pupils, one good and one outstanding, illustrated pupils’ confidence in interactions and relationships. The vibrant school displays are testament to how well pupils achieve in art, and the Year 5/6 assembly, where every pupil took part as a pirate, showed pupils’ musical development is good.

Pupils have a well-developed sense of right and wrong. They respect others and socialise very well. Pupils enjoy school and say they feel very safe within the school as they know that adults are very mindful of any concerns. As a consequence, attendance has improved. The school council is active in influencing provision of play equipment and fundraising events. The ‘buddy system’ between Reception and Year 6 is enjoyed by all involved. The standards reached by pupils in English, mathematics, science and ICT, combined with their keen appetite for teamwork, and their interest in learning, prepare them well for their transition to the next stage of their education.

*These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes*

<b>Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils’ behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

In most lessons observed, pupils were well motivated by the ideas and resources presented and were very keen to please their teachers and other adults. Due to the renewed focus on achievement, staff’s higher expectations of pupils’ progress have begun to be reflected in the more challenging targets being set for individuals. However, this is not yet consistent across the school and, in some year groups, teachers do not always take the chance to reinforce pupils’ targets during lessons or

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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when marking pupils’ work. Also, very occasionally, opportunities are missed in lessons to guide pupils in what they need to do to improve their skills. In the most effective lessons, this does not occur and lessons are planned to be very challenging and fun. This was clear in a design and technology lesson linked to history in Year 5/6 on pirate jewellery. The pupils were enthusiastic and sensible as they reflected on what life would be like on board an old sailing ship.

The school curriculum encourages creativity and practical learning experiences and promotes pupils’ enjoyment of learning. These approaches are continuing to be developed to ensure that pupils’ precise needs in relation to their skills in English and mathematics are properly covered. Again, the most effective use of this planning was seen in ICT and language development work.

Throughout the school, very positive relationships between staff and pupils contribute to the supportive ethos for study. Good use of praise encourages pupils’ attentiveness and hard work. The care, patience and understanding shown by staff to vulnerable pupils result in them attending and coping well and are an inspiration to all others in the school. The impact of the school’s good support, guidance and care is evident in the pupils’ good standards of behaviour and social skills.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

There is a common sense of purpose, clear drive and ambition to improve among leaders, staff and governors. The partnership between the acting headteacher and the acting deputy has begun to move the school forward at an improved pace. There is a clear understanding of strengths of the school and areas that need more development. The school’s self-evaluation is effective due to its rigour. This has resulted in a fully shared improvement plan with challenging targets and clear guidance for raising standards. Good teamwork is playing a valuable part in keeping staff focused and moving the school forward. The school administrators are considerable assets to the school and help ensure it runs smoothly.

As the very supportive and caring governors recognise, they have not held the school effectively to account in the past. This has led to a number of policies being out-of-date, which are now being updated with the staff leadership team taking the initiative. Governors challenge decisions and request explanations about the outcomes for pupils. Their zeal and care over the recruitment of a replacement

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headteacher show a diligence that many parents and carers appreciate. Staff and governors ensure that discrimination in any form is not tolerated, and the school takes its duty to promote equal opportunities seriously.

Procedures to safeguard pupils’ well-being, safety and health are satisfactory. Members of staff are being trained and they show care for pupils with a range of organisations to support pupils. The contribution the school makes to community cohesion is good and pupils are beginning to have a wider understanding of different faiths and cultures. A recent audit has identified the need to expand awareness about national perspectives.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make a good start to their schooling in the Reception class and achieve well. They settle happily into school because of good links with parents and carers and because of the strong nurturing environment. Staff make every effort to make all children feel welcome. As one parent observed, summing up the comments of many, ‘This has been our child’s first year at school and so far we are so pleased. The teachers are exceptionally friendly and have really ensured that our child has settled in well.’

The good parental relationships are maintained on a daily basis and through meetings, so parents and carers understand how their children learn.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is managed well and clear priorities are set for improvement. The enhancements in provision and outcomes are recent but considerable and clear, and are testament to the effective leadership of the acting headteacher and coordinator and the good teaching.

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Planning is generally good because careful account is taken of the regular ongoing assessments of children’s progress. Effective teamwork provides good routines, high expectations of behaviour and achievement, and excellent relationships. Consequently, children develop well personally and engage well with their learning. Stimulating and interesting activities are provided and there is a suitable mix of teacher-directed and child-initiated activities. Children’s language skills are being developed well with a clear focus on vocabulary. The outdoor area is not yet used effectively to support learning. Children thoroughly enjoy learning in the outside area, but activities there are not fully enhanced by the use of richer language, such as signs and questions, and by linking the tasks more carefully to those taking place indoors.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

The majority of the parents or carers who returned questionnaires, or who spoke to the inspection team, were happy with the school. They consider that the school has a dedicated team of staff and that it has a very warm, supportive and friendly atmosphere. The majority feel their children make adequate progress. Inspection evidence shows that most pupils are now making good progress. Parents and carers are particularly impressed with the pastoral support their children receive. Inspectors fully endorse these views. Inspectors do not agree with the small number of parental criticisms with regard to the current leadership position, and how parents and carers are kept informed of their children’s progress. These, and all other comments, were shared and discussed with the acting headteacher.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Forest Row Church of England Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The Inspection team received 91 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 225 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	46	51	42	46	2	2	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	53	58	37	41	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	34	37	43	47	10	11	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	28	31	51	56	9	10	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	30	33	51	56	3	3	2	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	27	30	51	56	9	10	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	37	45	49	9	10	2	2
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	32	35	41	45	8	9	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	30	33	50	55	5	5	3	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	31	51	56	5	5	3	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	27	51	56	6	7	3	3
The school is led and managed effectively	29	32	48	53	7	8	3	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	38	42	47	52	4	4	2	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



14 June 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Forest Row Church of England Primary School, Forest Row RH18 5DZ**

I am writing to thank you for your help when we inspected your school and to let you know what we found out. Yours is a good school. We enjoyed our time spent in some of your lessons and talking to some of you. We also looked at the work of the school and talked to many of the staff and some of the school governors. We were interested in what your parents and carers think of your school, and we particularly enjoyed listening to what you had to say.

These are some of the things it does particularly well.

- You all make good progress and enjoy your learning.
- The staff at the school work hard and the acting headteacher is doing a good job.
- The way you behave is good and you work and play well together.
- You feel safe at school and you know how to be healthy.
- You help your school to be a happy and better place to play and learn.
- You have a good understanding of right and wrong and look after each other.
- The way the school works with parents is good.

We have agreed with your school that there are a few things that will help it to become better.

- We have asked the headteacher to make sure that you are all given the best opportunities to learn no matter which class you are in. We know your teachers are all working hard to be the best they can be and we want them to learn from each other as well.
- We have asked the staff to look at how they can make the best use of the outside area in the Reception class.
- We have also asked your headteacher and staff to make sure you are given the chance to look at and understand about how children and adults live in places that are different from where you live.

You can help by continuing to listen carefully and take note of what they say.

Yours sincerely

David Marshall  
Lead inspector

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